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Joannis Mylonopoulos

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Panagiotis P. Iossif, Andrzej S. Chankowski, Catharine C. Lorber (éd.), More than Men, Less than Gods: Studies on Royal Cult and Imperial Worship

Joannis Mylonopoulos

REFERENCES

Panagiotis P. Iossif, Andrzej S. Chankowski, Catharine C. Lorber (éd.), *More than Men, Less than Gods: Studies on Royal Cult and Imperial Worship. Proceedings of the International Colloquium Organized by the Belgian School at Athens (November 1-2, 2007)*, Leuven/Paris/ Walpole MA, 2011. 1 vol. 15,5 × 24 cm, xviii+735 p., (*Studia Hellenistica*, 51). ISBN : 978-90-429-2470-3.

1 The present edited volume is the result of a conference on royal and imperial worship held in Athens in 2007. Although it focuses mainly on the cult of Hellenistic kings and Roman emperors, four papers shed light on royal worship in the Achaemenid Empire, Cyprus, and Parthia. The papers are framed by an introduction and a summary written by the editors. Instead of plates and a general bibliography, each article is followed by its respective bibliographical references and, if necessary, figures.

2 In his introduction ("Le culte des souverains aux époques hellénistique et impériale dans la partie orientale du monde méditerranéen : questions actuelles," p. 1-14), A.S. Chankowski offers some general remarks on the phenomenon of royal cults and poses several important questions about their political and religious significance, the exact status (divine or not) of the honoured persons, the origins of royal and imperial worship, and the possible interconnections between civic and dynastic cults. The A.

presents a helpful overview of previous scholarship, although he chiefly discusses the seminal works by A.D. Nock, C. Habicht, and S. Price.

3 The first group of articles is dedicated to pre-Hellenistic divine kingship in the Achaemenid Empire and Cyprus. M.B. Garrison's paper ("*By the Favor of Auramazdā*: Kingship and the Divine in the Early Achaemenid Period," p. 15-104) concentrates on the relationship between the Achaemenid king and the divine, using the reign of Darius I as a case study. Even though the article is one of the longest in the volume, two thirds are dedicated exclusively to Darius' tomb relief at Naqš-e Rustam. From the outset, the A. emphasizes that a royal cult in terms of religious worship of the living divine king did not exist in the Achaemenid Empire. After addressing two often contradictory conceptual approaches that have dominated scholarship – a Hellenocentric model based on Herodotus and one based on the so-called Avestan perspective, which looks at the material through the lens of Zoroastrianism –, G. highlights the methodological pitfalls associated with these interpretive models. Following a lengthy and far too descriptive analysis of the visual language of the relief at Naqš-e Rustam, the A. suggests that the relief seems to have attempted to foster an ideology that would blur the distinction between the king and the divine. — Compared to the paper above, H. Gitler's study ("Identities of the Indigenous Coinages of Palestine under Achaemenid Rule: the Dissemination of the Image of the Great King," p. 105-119) is not only more concise but also clearer in its structure and aims. Based on coins struck in Palestine under Achaemenid rule, G. proposes that the possibility of local ruler worship of the Great King at least in Samaria cannot be excluded, while he seems to negate the idea of ruler worship in the province of Judah. — Drawing upon Isokrates' *Evagoras*, C. Baurain ("La contribution des Teucrides aux cultes royaux de l'époque hellénistique," p. 121-155) presents an overview of the qualities that, according to the famous Athenian orator, the kings of Salamis on Cyprus, the Teukrids, possessed. Even if the Teukrids were associated via Aiakos with Zeus, Isokrates' celebratory text is, in my view, not the best possible literary source for suggesting any kind of cult in honour of the Salaminian kings. That being said, the A. is indeed cautious enough to avoid such an explicit approach to the *Evagoras*. In order to substantiate the idea of a royal 'proto-cult' in Salamis, B. turns his attention to the material evidence. He discusses the so-called Tomb 77, which he intriguingly identifies as a cenotaph where a dynastic cult took place. Less convincing is his interpretation of the so-called temple boys as representations of Opheltes/ Archemoros that aimed to create a link between Salamis and the sanctuary of Zeus at Nemea.

4 The second group of articles focuses on the cults of Hellenistic rulers. In his contribution, A. Chaniotis ("The Ithyphallic Hymn for Demetrios Poliorketes and Hellenistic Religious Mentality," p. 157-195) examines in great detail the religious significance of the famous hymn for Demetrios Poliorketes, which was sung in Athens in 291 or 290 BCE. The A. explores the connection of Demetrios to Demeter and Dionysos, suggesting convincingly that the hymn was performed by choruses of men and dancers wearing ithyphallic costumes in the context of a reception ritual, a *xenismos*. A particularly interesting passage (l. 15-19) compares Demetrios with other gods who are remote or even non-existent, and proclaims him to be a true god, manifest to the Athenians. C. suggests that the poet here had in mind the fact that Demetrios was residing in the Parthenon. Demetrios' divine nature is enhanced in l. 13-14 as well, where he is addressed as *pais* of Poseidon and Aphrodite. C. prefers to interpret this address as an allusion to Demetrios' victory at Salamis on Cyprus rather

than as a literal statement of his parentage (i.e. Demetrios as the actual son of the two deities). In general, the A. recognizes the hymn as a religious text that attempts to convey a political message. — In his article ("Never Mind the Bullocks: Taurine Imagery as a Multicultural Expression of Royal and Divine Power under Seleukos I Nikator," p. 197-228), O.D. Hoover treats the use of taurine iconography in coins struck under Seleukos I. After touching upon the Hellenocentric view of Seleukos' association with the bull as due to Dionysos and his popularity in Macedonia, H. brings into focus the significance of taurine symbolism in the Babylonian context. The A. persuasively suggests that the coins bearing various bull motifs were supposed to advertise the Babylonian gods' approval of Seleukos' kingship. In addition, coins with taurine imagery struck in the Upper Satrapies were meant to link the Greek king to the local religious traditions in Susiana, Persis, and Media. Despite the importance of the bull in Syria, it is interesting that coins with taurine iconography remained rare in Syria Seleukis until the 280s. H. proposes that the strong military presence in the region rendered superfluous the symbolic enhancement of the king's power. — On the basis of images on coins, P.P. Iossif discusses the origins of Apollo as the dynastic ancestor of the Seleukids ("Apollo *Toxotes* and the Seleukids: Comme un air de famille," p. 229-291). After some general – and not really necessary – remarks on Apollo in Homer and the god's pre-Hellenistic cults in Greece and Asia Minor, I. addresses the close ties between the early Seleukids and the sanctuary of Apollo at Didyma. Contrary to traditional views that consider Apollo Didymaios as the ancestor of the Seleukids, the A. places the presence of the dynasty in Didyma in the broader context of benefactions towards important Greek cult sites by Hellenistic rulers. Apart from some debated evidence, the epigraphic material seems to suggest that Seleukos II was the first Seleukid ruler to propagate a filiation from Apollo. Numismatic evidence shows that Apollo must have been introduced as the primary deity of the dynasty very early in the reign of Antiochos I. The relevant coinage reveals that a particular motif, the archer Apollo, became dominant. The bow and arrow were intrinsically associated with Near Eastern royal imagery, and this could have played a role in the selection of the motif of the divine archer on Seleukid coins. Yet, the image of the archer Apollo is rare on Greek coins, so the Seleukid imagery cannot be directly connected with Greek types. Following a brief survey of the iconographic types of the archer Apollo on Seleukid coins, the A. concludes that the first coins bearing the image of Apollo Toxotes must have been produced in Seleukeia on the Tigris. These images were, according to the A., a clear reference to the Mesopotamian and Iranian motif of the archer king. — In her paper ("Theos *Aigiochos*: the Aegis in Ptolemaic Portraits of Divine Rulers," p. 293-356), C.C. Lorber examines a very specific element in the iconography of the Ptolemies: the aegis. After a brief overview of the shrines for Alexander the Great in Karnak and Luxor, L. addresses Alexander's portrait on coins struck under Ptolemy I, on which he is depicted wearing a mitra, elephant headdress, and aegis. In discussing the image of Athena Promachos used as a reverse type, the A. suggests that the goddess could have been interpreted as the Egyptian goddess Neith. There is, however, nothing in the iconography of the archaistic statuesque image to suggest a (visual) conflation of the Greek deity with the Egyptian one. Soon after Ptolemy's coronation in 305/4 BCE, the mitra and the aegis became attributes of the new king of Egypt, thereby emphasizing the association of Ptolemy with Alexander. The image of Athena was soon replaced by Zeus' eagle and thunderbolt. The statue of Alexander Aigiochos, probably a cult image from Alexandria (A. Stewart), is the starting point for a brief analysis of numismatic

images of Ptolemy III wearing the aegis. In this context, the A. also discusses the radiate crown, which became an important attribute of Ptolemy V. Rare images of Ptolemy VI, VIII, and XII on coins reveal that the aegis must have been one of the most important divine attributes in the portraiture of the Ptolemies. At the very end of her paper, L. expresses her important view that numismatic portraits of divine rulers should not be automatically interpreted as means to inspire worship, but should rather be considered as visual proof of the ruler's charisma. — H. Hauben ("Ptolémée III et Bérénice II, divinités cosmiques," p. 357-388) likewise focuses on Hellenistic Egypt and more specifically on Ptolemy III and Berenike II. H. revisits the story about Berenike's hair, which disappeared shortly after she had dedicated it to the temple of Aphrodite/ Arsinoe for the safe return of her husband. According to Konon, the court astronomer, the hair was brought to the heavens and positioned among the stars. Kallimachos wrote that the hair had been placed among the immortals. For H., the story about Berenike's hair could be an indication of an early deification of the young queen. The association of a Ptolemaic ruler with the stars and, more generally, the kosmos can be found in the so-called decree of Canopus[1], which records the attempt of Ptolemy and Berenike to reform (or to correct, according to the text of the decree) the Egyptian calendar. In H.'s view, the reform was predestined to fail, since the indigenous population perceived Ptolemy III as a pharaoh who tried to destroy rather than to protect the cosmic order. — Although D. Plantzos' paper is also devoted to Ptolemaic Egypt ("The Iconography of Assimilation. Isis and Royal Imagery on Ptolemaic Seal Impressions," p. 389-415), its starting point is not royal but divine imagery, namely that of Isis,[2] and how it was translated in the female portraiture of the Ptolemies. It seems that the first Ptolemaic queen to be associated with Isis was Arsinoe II Philadelphos, who enjoyed a joint cult with Isis and Agathe Tyche during her lifetime. Only after her death was Arsinoe portrayed as Isis. Nevertheless, it is with Kleopatra III that a complete identification with Isis takes place. With respect to the seal impressions from the so-called Edfu hoard, the A. takes a cautious approach, suggesting that the Isis busts should be seen as representations of the goddess and not as portraits of Ptolemaic queens. P. proposes a similar interpretation of the female busts with vulture headdresses. — The co-authored article by F. de Callatay and C.C. Lorber ("The Pattern of Royal Epithets on Hellenistic Coinages," p. 417-455) offers an overview of royal epithets from Sicily to India. The A.s address the methodological problems inherent in literary, epigraphic, and numismatic evidence. They then proceed with an examination of epithets used on coins. With one exception (Parthia), the earliest cases for coins bearing royal epithets originate in Ptolemaic Egypt, although the use of epithets on coins in the 3rd cent. remains a rare phenomenon. The Parthian kings made the most extensive use of epithets on coins. The analytical part of the paper is rather brief, but the A.s produce five extremely helpful lists of royal epithets on coins that will become an invaluable research tool for anyone interested in the subject.

5 With the exception of Voutiras's article on Mark Antony, the third group of papers concentrates on the cults of Roman emperors primarily in the Eastern part of the imperium romanum. In his contribution ("Des honneurs divins pour Marc Antoine à Thessalonique?" p. 457-473), E. Voutiras reconstructs a cult of Mark Antony in Thessalonike. The A. suggests that Mark Antony must have been involved in the declaration of the city as a *civitas libera*, and this might have been the reason why the citizens of Thessalonike decided to initiate a new era, which they called "the era of Antony," as evidenced by three inscriptions. In addition, the city established new

games in honour of Antony. Although there is no direct evidence, V. hypothesizes that Thessalonike could have been the first Greek city to worship/honour Mark Antony as Neos Dionysos, long before Athens and Ephesos addressed the Roman triumvir in this way. — F. Lozano ("The Creation of Imperial Gods: Not only Imposition versus Spontaneity," p. 475-519) advocates a more differentiated interpretive approach to the birth of the imperial cult that goes beyond the simplistic traditional notions of imposition and spontaneity. The A. discusses in great detail the methodological hazards of explanatory models exclusively based on a dichotomy between a cult imposed externally on the western parts of the empire and the spontaneous foundation of imperial worship in the East. L. goes on to suggest that the imperial cult was the result of a polyvalent process of negotiation between centre and periphery, a sign of cultural change that depended on and was developed under the influence of local socio-political factors. While L. is certainly right to criticise monocausal models that attempt to explain the origins of the imperial cult, his paper remains, despite its length, rather vague when it comes to suggesting concretely alternative heuristic tools. — In her paper ("Étude comparative de l'introduction du culte impérial à Pergame, à Athènes et à Éphèse," p. 521-551), M. Kantiréa uses Athens, Pergamon, and Ephesos as representative case studies in order to demonstrate how local particularities helped facilitate the establishment of the imperial cult in the Greek cities of the East. The A. argues that in Pergamon the importance of the cults of the Attalids paved the way for the foundation of imperial cults at sites traditionally associated with the Hellenistic kings (for example, the sanctuaries of Athena and Demeter, the Asklepieion). In default of a significant tradition in the cult of Hellenistic rulers, Athens employed different means to incorporate smoothly the imperial cult into its religious system. By associating Augustus with Zeus Eleutherios, a symbolic connection between Athens' leading role in the Persian Wars and Augustus' victory over the Parthians was established. The notion of the emperor as 'liberator' became a key component of imperial power in Athens. Equally important was the connection between the emperor and the various manifestations of Apollo. In the case of cosmopolitan Ephesos, it was, according to K., the existence of a strong Roman elite that allowed the imperial cult to be woven rather easily into the city's religious fabric. — After emphasizing the importance of taking local particularities into account, M. Kajava focuses his remarks on statues and altars dedicated to or honouring Roman emperors in the East ("Honorific and other Dedications to Emperors in the Greek East," p. 553-592). The epigraphic evidence is arranged into four groups according to the grammatical cases employed in the dedicatory formulas. K.'s fifth category consists of examples using the formula ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας + the name of the emperor in the genitive case. Without omitting exceptions, the A. proposes that the use of the dative or genitive implies a dedication to the emperor, whereas the use of the accusative or nominative signals that the dedicated object had a rather honorific character. — Through a consideration of exclusively numismatic evidence, Z. Sawaya ("Le culte impérial en Phénicie : culte civique ou culte provincial ?" p. 593-618) confirms that the title *neokoros* cannot be found on coins struck by any of the cities in Phoenicia, although one has to presuppose that there must have been some kind of a provincial centre for the cult of the Roman emperor. Byblos, Tyros, Berytos, Heliopolis, Tripolis, and Arca Caesarea could have been, at different times between Augustus and Valerian II, the centre of a provincial cult of the emperor. The A. argues that the use of the designation "metropolis" on coins (for example, in Tyros) cannot be taken as evidence for the existence of a provincial

cult, since Phoenician cities were already using this term in the Hellenistic period, mainly for reasons of propaganda. — On the basis of Greek papyri, J. de Jong ("Celebrating Supermen: Divine Honors for Roman Emperors in Greek Papyri from Egypt," p. 619-647) explores the nature of divine honours for the Roman emperor in Egypt in the course of the first three centuries CE. The A. singles out references to imperial temples, celebrations of the Augustan days, imperial oaths,[3] and imperial titulature. The paper shows convincingly that – at least according to the papyrological evidence – the imperial cult in Egypt experienced diminishing importance in the 3rd cent. CE (no references to Augustan days or imperial temples).

6 The fourth group of articles, which deals with the so-called periphery of the Greek and Roman royal cult, consists of a single paper by A. Invernizzi dedicated to the cult of the Arsakids in Parthia ("Royal Cult in Arsakid Parthia," p. 649-690). The A. focuses on building activity in Old Nisa, the dynastic seat of the Arsakids and ascribes a ceremonial function to the Red Building, the Square House, the Round Hall, the Tower Building, and the Square Hall. Although the architecture treated by I. is indeed impressive, the arguments for a ceremonial function are not always conclusive, partly because of the lack of strong evidence, especially with respect to the interpretation of the Red and the Tower Buildings.

7 In their summary, P.P. Iossif and C.C. Lorber ("More than Men, Less than Gods: Concluding Thoughts and New Perspectives," p. 691-710) offer an excellent overview of the papers that exceeds a mere description of each author's topic and approach. The editors manage to combine the results of every paper with more general and theoretical questions and perspectives. The editors reflect upon the achievements of their volume and at the same time broach issues for future scholarship.

8 The volume closes with nine extremely helpful indices (p. 713-735) that facilitate the use of this admittedly sizeable book. Considering the richness and diversity of the volume, one only wishes that the general index were more detailed.

9 Perhaps the only major point of criticism worth mentioning is the unbalanced choice of topics. In their summary, the editors stress the multi-disciplinary character of the volume, which is unfortunately incongruent with my impression: seven papers are exclusively or largely numismatic. The rest are based on epigraphic evidence (2), literary sources (2), papyri (1), and reliefs and/or seals (2). Two papers are more general in their nature and not based solely on a specific category of material. Only Invernizzi's paper discusses monumental architecture and no paper focuses on freestanding sculpture. Among the papers dealing with the Hellenistic world, two focus on the Seleukids and three on the Ptolemies. The articles on the imperial cult demonstrate a rather unbalanced focus on the eastern part of the Empire (five papers out of six). Nevertheless, the volume is an excellent representative of current scholarship on the still puzzling phenomenon of Hellenistic royal cult and Roman imperial worship. The countless and superbly chosen illustrations greatly enhance comprehension of the texts. One cannot but praise the fact that the editorial work is impeccable, with a near absence of typos and the publication of high quality photographs. In conclusion, the editors should be congratulated for gathering all these scholars and for producing such a major – in terms of both pages and quality – contribution.

NOTES

1. It is quite unfortunate that the A. provides only a French translation and not the original text.
2. One will have to disagree with the A.'s claim that Isis was "worshipped in relative obscurity" during the Classical Egyptian period.
3. These are oaths in a private or administrative context and not oaths of loyalty to the Roman emperor.

AUTHORS

JOANNIS MYLONOPOULOS

Columbia University